

November 17, 2004

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This is the first Fire Training Academy Survey conducted with the Washington State Patrol. The responses from other state fire training academies were compared to our current Academy practices of November 2004.

The survey instrument is comprised of the following three categories:

1. Training Facility Information
2. Recruit Training Programs
3. Academy Resources.

Each category is further defined with a total of 35 questions/statements. For each question, applicants either mark all that apply, fill in a box, or attach additional information.

Within the United States, each state was given an opportunity to complete a survey regarding their fire training center or academy. Fifty surveys were distributed on September 9, 2004 and 13 completed surveys were returned by the September 30, 2004 deadline.

The findings from the survey indicate that 6 of the 13 states have Academies and the 7 other states have a training facility or program. The length of recruit training was as little as one week for one state and varied from 6 to 10 weeks for other states. The prerequisite that occurred most often for Recruit Training Academy (RTA) enrollment was full-time employment in the field. Other prerequisites included volunteer and medical screening. The total weekly tuition for the states' RTAs ranged from \$0 to over \$3,000. The states that have Academies had a visibly higher tuition cost than the states that did not. When looking at special or unique fire training props, many of the states had Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting, Confined Space, and High Angle Rescue available. Other courses and curriculum other than live fire or tactical rescue training offered were Public Education, Management, Administration, and Fire Prevention. Each state listed at least, one of these. The states' facility annual operating budget varied from \$300,000 to \$15 million. The result of this question showed that the states with Academies did not have high operating budgets. The two highest budgets were from Illinois Fire Service Institute and Virginia Department of Fire Programs.

The information that results from doing this type of survey has assisted the Washington State Patrol's FTA in determining what qualities are dissimilar between our academy and those of other states, as well as defining which elements we have in common. The length of our recruit training is about the same length as the other RTA's, at 10 weeks. Medical screening, which is a prerequisite for our RTA enrollment, was also a prerequisite for three other state training facilities. In addition, our total tuition (\$2800) and annual operating budget (3 million) is in the same range of the other states. This information will help in making improvements, receiving funding from the legislature, and reevaluating current practices.

The full survey results are posted on the Washington State Patrol Fire Training Academy Web site at: [www.wsp.wa.gov/fire/fireacad.htm](http://www.wsp.wa.gov/fire/fireacad.htm). If you would like additional detailed information regarding the survey, please call Ms. Susan Ramsey at (360) 753-0678 or [Susan.Ramsey@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:Susan.Ramsey@wsp.wa.gov).